



RAIL RUNNER MAIL

www.mrcog-nm.gov

Spring 2005



Timeline

- Summer 2005
Station construction to begin
- Fall 2005
Ordered locomotives and passenger cars to arrive
- Winter 2005
Commuter trains to start service



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A Message from Governor Bill Richardson



Governor Bill Richardson speaking at the unveiling of the Rail Runner name and logo.

It is with great excitement that I welcome you to Rail Runner Mail, the Mid-Region Council of Governments' (MRCOG) new commuter


rail newsletter. As we head into 2005, we are "on track" to begin offering passenger rail service from Belen to Bernalillo by the end of 2005, and possibly extending service into Santa Fe by the end of 2008.

Over the last eighteen months, MRCOG and the New Mexico Department of Transportation have worked hand-in-hand with local governments and community organizations to make sure that the planning process reflects the needs and desires of every community along the route, and that each community is in a position to maximize the benefits it offers.

My administration is com-

mitted to a truly multi-modal transportation system for New Mexico and the commuter rail project is a key element in that vision. Passenger rail represents a dramatic step forward in addressing regional transportation issues. And even though my goal to create an entire transportation system in only two years is a challenge, we are on schedule.

We have come a long way in the past year, and we have a lot of work ahead of us, but we look forward to continuing the spirit of cooperation among all the local governments, organizations and individuals who are involved in this project.

So, climb aboard and join us for the ride! 



New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson unveils the Middle Rio Grande commuter rail line's name (Rail Runner!) and logo.

Commuter Rail Overview

Governor Richardson's Investment Partnership (GRIP) secured funding for the implementation of Commuter Rail in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.

In late 2003, the legislature passed and Governor Bill Richardson signed into law House Bill 15, now referred to as Governor Richardson's Investment Partnership (GRIP), which secured funding for the implementation of commuter rail service.

Commuter rail is the only non-roadway capital project in the entire \$1.2 billion transportation bill and is designed to address serious transportation problems in the confined and increasingly congested I-25 corridor between Belen and Bernalillo - especially during rush hours.

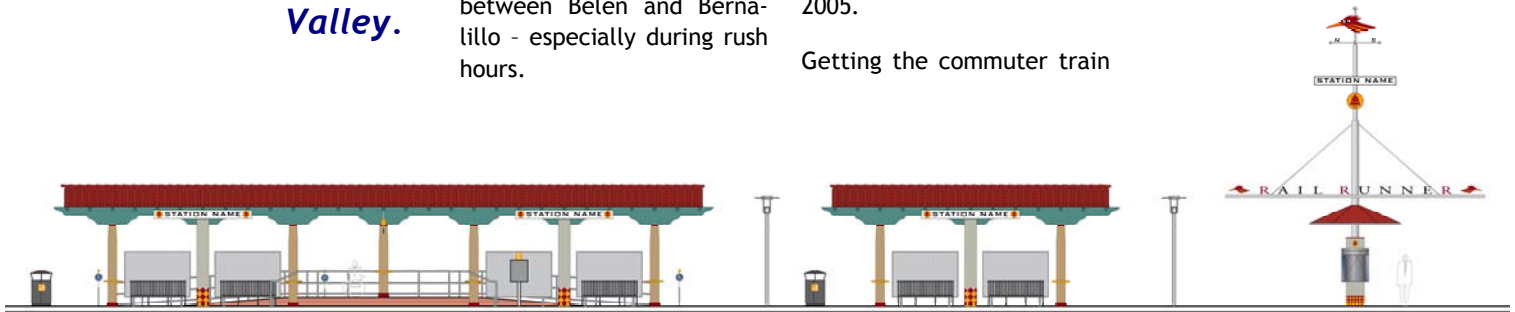
According to the 2000 Census, almost 13,000 persons travel from Valencia County to Bernalillo County daily for work, while 20,000 travel from Sandoval County to Bernalillo County. And these figures do not include trips made for non-work purposes, such as shopping, education, medical services, and recreation!

The Rail Runner, operating on existing railroad track between Belen and Bernalillo, is scheduled to begin service in the Winter of 2005.

Getting the commuter train

between Belen and Bernalillo up and running will cost \$75 million (see figure below and to right). Annual operating costs of the commuter rail system are estimated at between \$8 and \$12 million.

By comparison, providing comparable capacity to I-25 between Belen and Bernalillo would cost between \$120 and \$150 million, and the planned reconstruction of the Coors/I-40 interchange alone will cost over \$90 million.



Station Design

Conceptual designs of the commuter rail platforms were developed through a series of meetings with citizens, local elected officials, and a design team of architects and planners.

Platform design focuses on durability and ease of maintenance as well as safety, room for future expansion, and ease of access.

Some platform features will be common to all stations in order to create a theme and consistent identity. These elements include shade canopies, wind screens, lighting designed to protect the night skies, seating, and bike racks.

In addition, each station will have unique design elements to express each community's identity. These

unique elements will include logos/icons and unique building materials and styles.

Local artists have been encouraged to submit art proposals, and a committee of artists and local officials from jurisdictions along the commuter rail line are involved in selecting unique windscreen designs for each station.

MotivePower® Locomotives and Bombardier® passenger cars have been purchased. Bombardier® is the company that supplies cars to The Coast and The Sounder in Seattle among other transit systems. Shown below is one locomotive with two cars, but additional cars can be added and locomotives are expected to arrive in October 2005. The New Mexico Rail Runner Express motif will be featured on the train's interior and

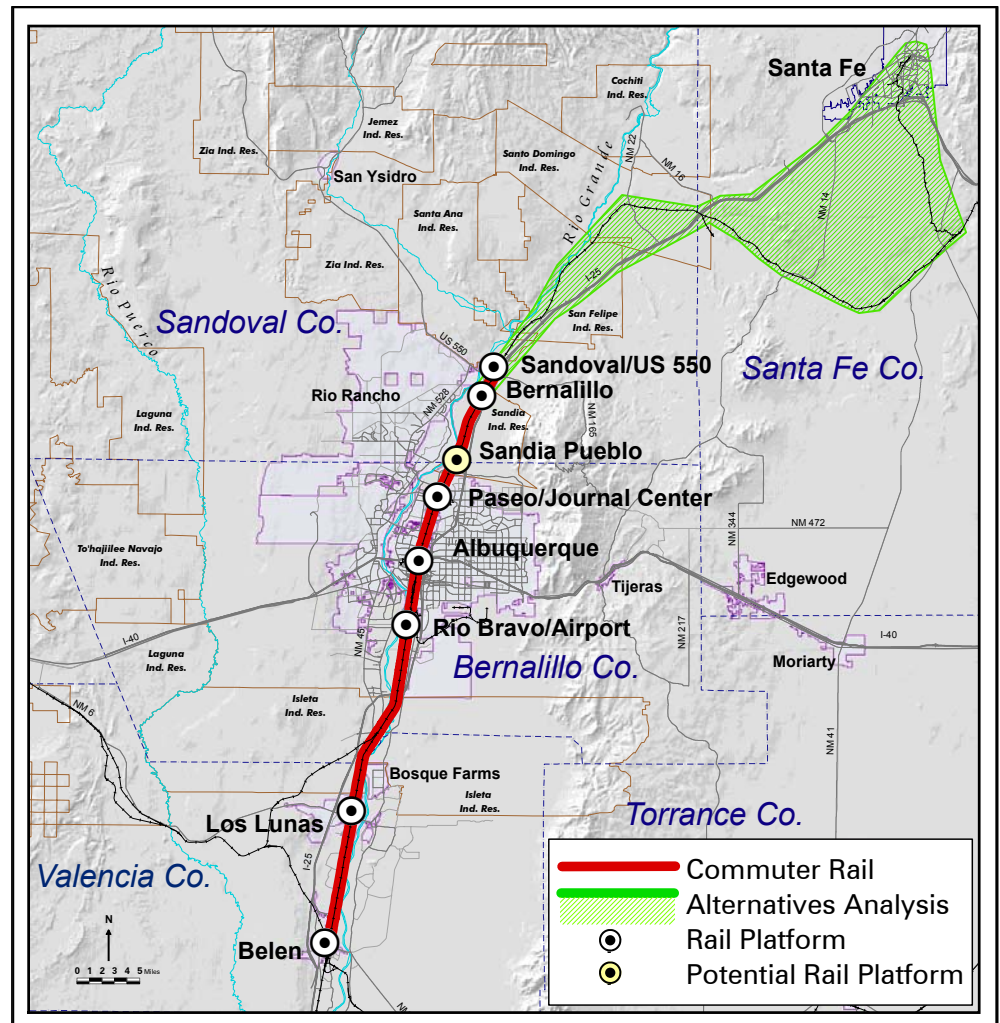


Rail Runner Stations

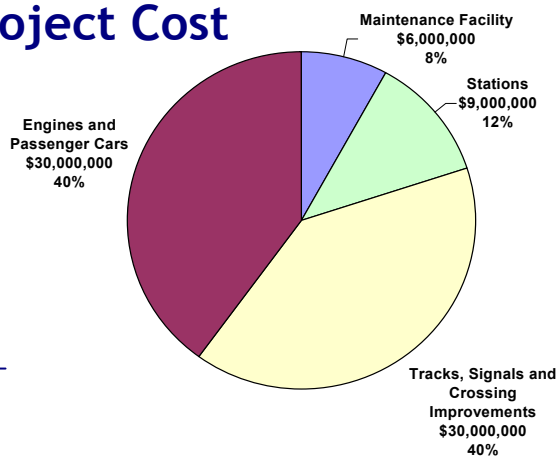
Rail Runner stations will be established in:

- **Sandoval/U.S. 550** in Bernalillo at U.S. 550 and the railroad tracks
- **Downtown Bernalillo** east of Bernalillo's Town Hall
- **Paseo/Journal Center** at El Pueblo Road (just south of Paseo del Norte) between Edith Boulevard and 2nd Street
- **Downtown Albuquerque** at the Alvarado Transportation Center (1st Street and Central Avenue)
- **Rio Bravo/Airport** at the northeast corner of Rio Bravo and the railroad tracks
- **Los Lunas** at Court-house Drive and the railroad tracks
- **Belen** at the northeast corner of Reinken Avenue and the railroad tracks

In addition, a Rail Runner station at Roy Avenue is being explored with Sandia Pueblo.



Project Cost



The map above shows the Rail Runner Line (in red) and the station locations. Also shown is the area covered by the Bernalillo to Santa Fe alternatives analysis study (in green) which may result in an extension of the Rail Runner line to Santa Fe by 2008

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ed. The cars
and exterior.



Message from MRCOG Executive Director Lawrence Rael

"When the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad laid track through the Rio Grande Valley in the 1880's the resulting freight and passenger services transformed the economic fortunes of the region. Our new Rail Runner Express will provide an enormous boost to this region's economic development efforts. We will be in a stronger position to attract new businesses and create new jobs if we can draw on the combined resources of our communities. Commuter rail will link our communities, pool our human resources, and preserve our great quality of life by giving people more options for work and play. And like the trains that first ran through New Mexico in the 1800s, passenger rail may kick off a new era of growth and prosperity in this state."



MRCOG Executive Director
Lawrence Rael

For more information about the Rail Runner visit www.mrcog-nm.gov or contact Tony Sylvester at (505) 247-1750 (tsylvester@mrcog-nm.gov).

During the months of August, September and October of 2004, MRCOG staff in conjunction with New Mexico Department of Transportation staff, conducted open houses and made presentations in communities along the commuter rail line.

The citizen turnout and positive responses we were met with were overwhelming. More than 450 people signed in at Open House events that were held in Belen, Los Lunas, the South Valley, the North Valley, the Town of Bernalillo, and Downtown Albuquerque. Please check our website regularly for upcoming events: www.mrcog-nm.gov.



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